

What is rosin?

- Bow rosin is made of tree sap combined with small amounts of other ingredients (or not), poured into molds, allowed to dry and harden, unmolded, and polished.



Why rosin a bow?

- Without rosin, the hair is too smooth; it slides over the strings and the sound is faint and thin. When bow hair is filled with the right amount of rosin, the rosin particles “bite” or micro-pluck the strings, causing them to vibrate and create a beautiful tone.

What’s the best rosin?

It depends. What instrument are you playing? Are you a professional? A casual player? A student? Does your teacher prefer that you use a certain rosin? There are many brands in both light and dark rosin, and at all price ranges. Each produces subtle differences in tone. In our experience, most people seem to prefer a medium amber rosin, but everyone has their individual preferences.

- **The sap for light rosin** is tapped in late winter or early spring, and generally is gold or light amber, and produces a light, smooth sound.
- **Dark-rosin** saps are tapped in summer and fall. Dark rosin generally produces a lower, grittier sound.
- **Additions to rosin** include metals that produce different tones: gold (warm, clear), silver (bright, clear), copper (warm, velvety), and lead (velvety). Dyes are sometimes added for appearance.
- **The amount of dust** produced during play varies with different types of rosin. Generally, the more expensive and lighter rosins produce less dust than the cheaper or darker rosins.
- **Price and quality** do generally go together in rosin. The more expensive professional rosins can make differences in tone that matter a lot to the professional, but aren’t usually a consideration for beginning players on student instruments..
- **Information from manufacturers** can be useful when choosing your rosin.

How do you apply rosin?

- **Tighten the hair** by turning the screw (at the very bottom tip of the bow) slowly clockwise, tightening the hair until it has a slight bounce when placed on the strings. The hair should pull into a smooth, unified look. Don't tighten too much.
- **Hold the rosin in your left hand** (even if you're left-handed). With the bow in your right hand, make five to ten strokes across the rosin. (If the bow is new or newly haired, you may need to apply more.)
- **Apply a little more rosin to the hair near the bow tip and near the frog**—the ends should be more heavily rosined than the middle.
- You may need to **apply more rosin than usual before you play a long concert or a very fast piece.**

What problems could I have with rosin?

- **It could dry out and get too hard.** Always close the cloth or container after you use rosin, and keep it in the case when you're not using it.
- **Some people are allergic to rosin.** Be thoughtful and don't create clouds of rosin dust near other people.
- **Rosin buildup on the strings can cause sound problems** just like those caused by too much rosin in the hair. Keep your strings clean by wiping them with a clean microfiber or 100% cotton or silk cloth after you play.